

Hot weather can cause serious illness, death

As New Mexico’s hot weather continues, the safety and well-being of people who spend time working and playing outdoors become a concern.

This is the beginning of Albuquerque’s monsoon season and everyone is susceptible to high temperatures as well as higher than normal levels of humidity.

According to the National Weather Service, an average of 175 Americans are killed each year by summer heat. In some years, heat is the biggest killer among all types of severe weather. More than 1,250 people died during the devastating U.S. heat wave of 1980 and, 465 heat-related deaths were reported in Chicago during a 16-day period as recently as 1995.

Heat illnesses can be difficult to recognize because people don’t know what to look for and the symptoms can come on very quickly.

You might not recognize heat cramps as a heat illness because it often happens after exertion in the sun and could be mistaken for strained muscles. Actually, it’s a response to muscle dehydration and electrolyte, or salt,

Go to “kirtland.af.mil” and click on “heat stress monitoring” for the latest Heat Stress Index for the base provided by Bioenvironmental Engineering.

imbalance. Heat exhaustion might also be hard to recognize because the person often feels cool and clammy to the touch. That’s because they are starting to experience shock. They usually are very sweaty and have chills, headache, dizziness and sometimes vomiting.

Heat stroke is the most dangerous condition and is characterized by very high body temperature, hot skin and mental confusion that can lead to coma and death if not treated immediately. Even with the best medical care, heat stroke is fatal in more than one out of 10 cases.

Heat-related illnesses can cause serious injury and even death if unattended.

The American Red Cross recommends that victims of heat-related illness should lie down. They should be moved to a cool place, given cool water to drink and ice packs or cool wet cloths should be applied to the skin.

If a victim refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness, call for emergency assistance immediately.

Prevent heat illness

- ★ **Dress for the heat.**
 - ★ Wear lightweight, light-colored clothes. Light colors reflect some of the sun’s energy.
 - ★ Wear a hat, use an umbrella.
- ★ **Drink water.**
 - ★ Carry water or juice—drink continuously—even when not thirsty.
 - ★ Avoid alcohol and caffeine—both dehydrate you.
- ★ **Eat small meals more often.**
 - ★ Avoid high-protein foods—they increase metabolic heat.
- ★ **Slow down.**
 - ★ Avoid strenuous activity.
 - ★ Do strenuous activity during the coolest part of the day—4-7 a.m.
 - ★ Stay indoors when possible.
- ★ **Be a good neighbor.**
 - ★ Check in on elderly residents in your neighborhood.

It’s best to prevent heat illnesses from occurring in the first place. Most heat illnesses are preventable by drinking adequate fluids and staying cool. As the name implies, heat illnesses are caused by excessive heat and associated dehydration. Specifically, it’s when the body is unable to get rid of excessive heat. Exertion, humidity, wearing heavy clothes and sunburns all contribute to retaining heat. Sweating cools the body, but also causes dehydration, which can result in electrolyte imbalances — a dangerous combination. Generally, the hotter it is, the faster the water loss. Hence, the best prevention is not allowing excess heat to build up and to stay well hydrated. Wear loose clothing made of fabrics that “breathe” or allow evaporation of sweat, such as cotton or linen. Use sunscreen and wear a

hat to prevent sunburn. Take periodic breaks from exercise to let your body cool down, preferably in a cool, shaded area or indoors.

Preexisting illness, like a cold, can make it harder for your body to adjust to the heat and can increase the likelihood of heat illness. People who are feeling poorly should stay indoors if they can.

Heat illnesses can turn a nice summer day into a miserable experience, but it doesn’t have to. A bit of preparation and quick recognition of problems can help keep your summertime outdoor activities fun and safe.

Hot hound or cool cat? Help your pet chill

You may want sun and surf in the summer, but your dog and cat want shade and water. Without it, they can overheat, become ill and die in a short time.

If you leave your pet in the car on a hot day or in the yard without shade or water you are risking your animal’s life.

Heatstroke, characterized by excessive panting and salivation, vomiting, an anxious or staring expression, a fast pulse rate and high body temperature, can cause brain damage and even death.

If you notice these symptoms in your pet, act quickly by immersing the animal in cool water or pouring cool water over the animal. You can also put ice packs on the animal’s head. As soon as the animal cools off, take it to the veterinarian for medical treatment.

The best treatment for heatstroke is, of course, prevention.

Never take your pet with you in the car if it will be left unattended. If it is necessary to take your pet in the car; park in the shade and periodically check on it to make sure it’s okay. Even with the car windows slightly open, if the temperature outside reaches 85 degrees, the inside car temperature can reach 120 degrees in just 30 minutes.

If your pet is left outside on warm days, remember to provide protection from the sun and free access to plenty of cool drinking water.

Strenuous activity and excitement should be avoided on warm days. When away from home, always carry water with you on hot days and give your pet small amounts frequently.

For more information on pet care call the Kirtland AFB Veterinarian Clinic at 846-4276.


Know your FPCON

Force Protection Condition, FPCON, is the military identification of and response to terrorist threats.

- The five warning categories are:
- ★ **FPCON NORMAL**
General threat of possible terrorist activity; routine security posture
 - ★ **FPCON ALPHA**
General threat of possible terrorist activity; extent unpredictable
 - ★ **FPCON BRAVO**
Increased and more predict-

- able threat of terrorist activity; higher security may be needed for weeks
- ★ **FPCON CHARLIE**
Incident has occurred or terrorist action is imminent; implementing the higher security measures needed for this category for more than a short period will create hardship and affect the peacetime activities of the unit and its people

- ★ **FPCON DELTA**
Applies to the immediate area where a terrorist attack has occurred or when intelligence has been received that terrorist action against a specific location or person is likely; normally a localized condition
- Level 1 Antiterrorism Training is an annual requirement for all active-duty Airmen.

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South Valley gate re-opens Monday

The South Gate reopens Monday with operating hours 6-8:30 a.m. and 3:30-5:30 p.m. weekdays. The gate is closed weekends and holidays. The south gate to the base closed as a result of force protection condition changes in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists attacks. Reopening is now possible due to reassessment of basewide services by the 377th Security Forces Squadron and realignment of force protection coverage areas. All commercial vehicles continue using the Kirtland Gate. No visitor's passes are provided at the South Gate. The road inside the South Gate is maintained by the base; however, outside the entry gate, the road belongs to Bernalillo County. Wayne Ragan, Base Safety chief, reminds drivers to use care on the road outside that has "deteriorated significantly" during the years since base employees have traveled it. "The road is passable," Ragan noted, "but there are lots of potholes and ruts in the road. This makes for a potentially hazardous situation." Ragan cautions drivers to reduce their speed, take their time and plan for delays because of changes to traffic patterns. He added that vehicle damage could easily occur at high speeds.



Senior Airmen Kenny Kennemer

Duvall commands Nellis AFB, Nev. squadron

Lt. Col. Larry J. Duval takes command of the 896th Munitions Squadron, based at Nellis AFB, Nev. In the change of command ceremony there last week, Lt. Col. Roy Matthews relinquished command to move to his new assignment at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Kirtland AFB. Presiding officer was Col. Patricia K. Hunt, 377th Maintenance Group commander at Kirtland AFB.

Units quickly respond to employee's urgent needs

The Nuclear Weapons Directorate and the Nuclear Weapons Counterproliferation Agency came to the aid of a 25 year civil service employee recently. Judy Evans, the technical secretary for three Nuclear Weapons Directorate engineering divisions, has multiple sclerosis. Due to an exacerbation of her disease, she was unable to resume her normal life style. In eight hours, these two organizations came up

with the funding to admit Evans as a resident of the Albuquerque Manor Nursing home until such time as medical retirement paperwork and institutional Medicaide can pick up the bill. The 125 individuals from these two organizations donated close to \$1000 in a matter of hours. "The quick reaction and overwhelming response was a testament to TEAM KIRTLAND," said Cynthia H. Kaiser, Nuclear Weapons Directorate technical director.